

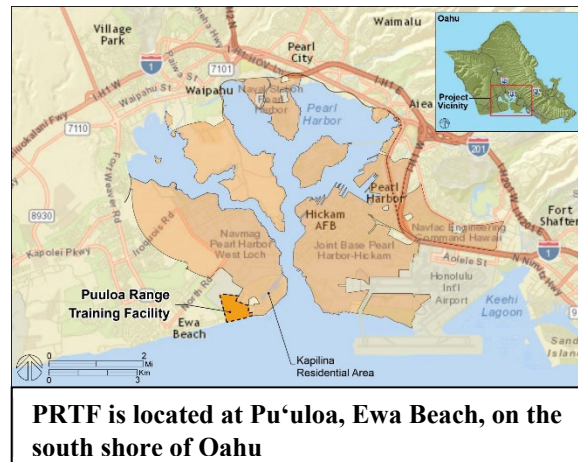


2021 SecNav Environmental Awards Environmental Planning, Team Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



Introduction

The Hawai'ian Islands are the most isolated landmasses in the world, with a unique cultural resource heritage and diverse and sensitive natural resources including 25 percent of all endangered species found in the United States. Marine Corps Base Hawai'i (MCBH) was created in 1994 to consolidate Marine Corps assets in Hawai'i. MCBH consists of 2,951-acre Mokapu Peninsula (MCBH Kaneohe Bay); 220-acre Camp H. M. Smith; 137-acre Pu'uoloa Range Training Facility (PRTF); 27-acre Pearl City Warehouse Annex; 63-acre Manana Housing Area; 187-acres of Waikane Valley, and 1074-acre Marine Corps Training Area-Bellows (MCTAB), all on the Island of Oahu. On Molokai, MCBH controls a 12-acre training facility. MCBH's mission is to maintain facilities and provide services that support readiness and global projection of operating forces while promoting the wellbeing, morale, and safety of military personnel, their families, and the civilian workforce. The military and civilian workforce is over 16,000 strong: 10,109 military personnel with 5,539 military dependents (residing both on and off of base), 1,842 Civilian Marines, and 426 contractors working in support of the mission. Approximately 10,000 retirees regularly use base service facilities.



PRTF is located at Pu'uoloa, Ewa Beach, on the south shore of Oahu



PRTF is a 165-acre range that extends along about 3,000 feet of sandy shoreline

The Pu'uoloa Range Training Facility is a small-arms training range located at Pu'uoloa, Ewa Beach, on the south shore of Oahu. It's situated immediately west of the Kapilina residential area and the Pearl Harbor entrance channel. The ocean area directly adjacent to the PRTF shoreline is located within the Pearl Harbor Naval Defensive Sea Area (PHNDSA). The 165-acre range extends along about 3,000 feet of sandy shoreline, and consists of six small-arms ranges (pistols, rifles up to 7.62mm, and shotguns) of different distances. Ranges A and B on the west end are long-distance ranges (up to 3,000 yards) and their ocean end consists of large earthen berms with

concrete barrier walls on top. The other four ranges (C, D, E and F) are shorter rifle and pistol ranges from 150 to 250 feet long with earthen berms along the beach. The PRTF, in operation since 1915, is utilized by all military branches as well as State and County police and other agencies (e.g., the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hawai'i National Guard, State of Hawai'i Department of Land and Natural Resources conservation officers, and the Honolulu Police Department, among others) requiring small arms training and practice. It is the only range of this type on Oahu and is heavily utilized. It is critical to mission readiness, and cannot easily be relocated, particularly the rifle long distance ranges. It is also congressionally mandated for the USMC to perform range management sustainment under Marine Corps Order P3550.10.

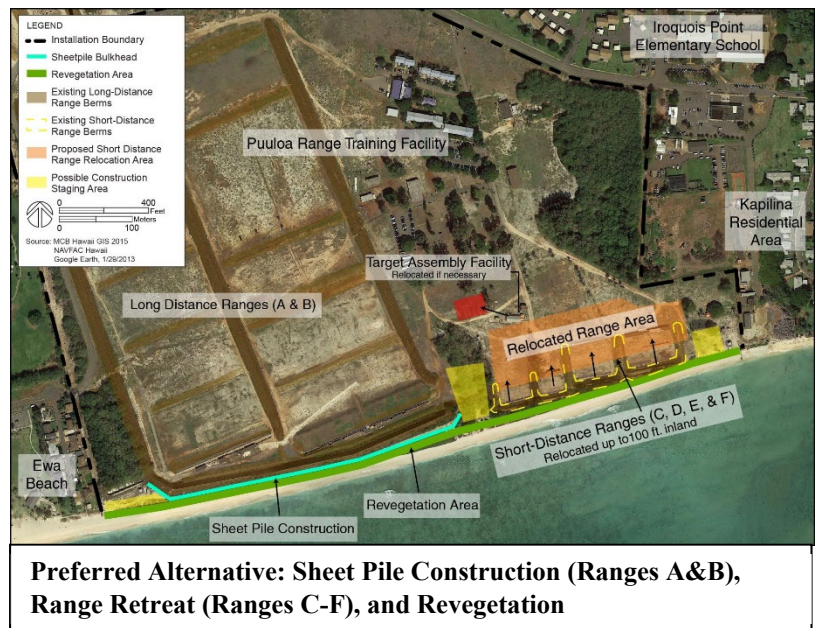


2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



Erosion, shoreline recession, and sand migration have been noted at the PRTF for many years and is expected to worsen with the impacts of sea level rise. According to NASA estimates, global sea level rise appears to be 3.16 mm per year, with the rate increasing with time (NASA 2015). The Hawai'i Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission (HCCMAC) recently evaluated coastal trends in the state, noting that estimates of global sea level rise range between 1 and 3 feet, or potentially as high as 6 feet by 2100, depending on future greenhouse gas emissions, and many other factors (2017). If left unaddressed, these impacts will result in degradation of the PRTF, loss of its critical mission capability, and disturbance to precious natural resources.

In 2015, a MCBH Pu'uoloa Shoreline Erosion Study assessed shoreline erosion and recommended solutions. The results of the study were used by the environmental planning team who developed a Proposed Action and potential alternatives to correct PRTF's erosion issues in an August 2019 Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The goal of the Proposed Action was to initiate measures to mitigate coastal erosion at PRTF in order to protect it from continuing shoreline erosion which could compromise its use. Measures to mitigate coastal erosion are needed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the range to support USMC-mandated small-arms training requirements.



Background

The planning team evaluated a combination of measures to mitigate coastal erosion that incorporated the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Engineering with Nature Initiative using Natural and Nature Based Features (NNBF). This included the Preferred Alternative of moving the short-distance ranges (Ranges C-F) back from the shoreline, revegetation of available fast land areas fronting all ranges as feasible, and installing approximately 1,500 feet of sheet pile, buried to about 12 inches above the ground along the fast land boundary of the long-distance ranges (Ranges A and B).

The team coordinated and implemented a responsive public involvement strategy throughout the pre and post NEPA process in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 Code of Federal Regulations subpart 1506.6), DoD, and USMC policies and guidance. The EA and proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) were advertised in the local newspaper of record, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser, from August 29-31, 2019, and public comments on the issue were solicited from August 29 through September 13, 2019. No comments were received.



2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



The USMC also solicited public and agency input regarding the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation process during a 30-day public comment period prior to starting the EA. A notice for the Section 106 consultation was published in the Honolulu Star-Advertiser newspaper on September 2, 3 and 4, 2016, and in the State of Hawai'i Office of Environmental Quality Control (OEQC) bi-monthly Environmental Notice on September 8, 2016. No comments were received.

Based on the EA analysis, no significant impacts requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) were identified, and a FONSI was signed on November 14, 2019.

The MCBH Environmental Planning Team

As part of the EA process, the environmental planning team, detailed below, consulted with relevant Federal and State agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Hawai'i Office of Planning, and the Hawai'i Historic Preservation Division.

- ❖ LtCol Timothy Pochop, Director of the Environmental Compliance and Protection Division for MCBH. Oversaw environmental planning to include natural and cultural resource regulatory consultations and mitigation planning. Played a vital role in responding to public, Congressional, and media inquiries.
- ❖ Mr. Lance Bookless, Senior Natural Resources Manager for MCBH. Developed the Pu'uloa Shoreline Stabilization project, obtained funding from MCICOM to accomplish the project, and coordinated with the contractor to develop the shoreline stabilization and restoration alternatives. He coordinated access for USFWS to Pu'uloa's shoreline in support of the Sec 7 consultation for the threatened green turtle and endangered Hawaiian monk seal that periodically hauls-out onto Pu'uloa's beach.
- ❖ Mrs. Jacquelyn Bomar, NEPA Program Manager for MCBH. Provided NEPA planning support. Coordinated and contributed responses to public, Congressional, and media inquiries.
- ❖ Mr. Daniel Geltmacher, Range and Training Area Manager (RTAM) and Installation Range Control Officer for MCBH. Collected training requirements (TRs) and mission essential tasks (METs), coordinated with the tenant commands and USMC HQs on items to be included in the project. Coordinated with TECOM RTAM and Program Manager Training Systems for project funding and design. Coordinated with the project design team on interpretive signs at the training location to teach Marines about the sensitive nature of the training site. Contributed to responses to public and Congressional inquiries.
- ❖ Mr. John Bigay, Environmental Planner for NAVFAC Pacific. Provided NEPA planning support as the EA Project Manager which included coordination with the Action Proponent throughout the project. He also provided coordination with the NAVFAC Pacific natural and cultural resources subject-matter experts and their efforts with respect



2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



to agency consultations and coordinated with the EA contractor on the EA process and preparation.

- ❖ Meagan Ostrem Community Plans Liaison Officer for MCBH. Coordinated all official responses to Congressional inquiries. Provided continuity of communication with Hawaii state and federal elected officials. Following an on-site meeting with the Hawaii Federal Delegation, Ms. Ostrem facilitated continued engagement and communication regarding the status of the Shoreline Stabilization EA and issuance of the FONSI. Ms. Ostrem continues to monitor community and elected official interest in the shoreline of the Pu'uloa Range and Training Facility to support the long-term erosion management needs of the USMC facility.

Challenges

Starting in September 2019, post public comment period, the planning team was faced with mounting public concern over perceived shortcomings of the PRTF Shoreline Stabilization EA project. Members of the public suggested that a complete EIS should be conducted to comply with NEPA prior to taking any further action. MCBH was first made aware of the concern through several complaints from a concerned Ewa Beach resident at an Ewa Beach Neighborhood Board meeting and through emails sent directly to MCBH. This individual elevated his concerns to a State House Representative, U. S. Senator, and U. S. Representative, the Surfrider Foundation Oahu Chapter, and several local news outlets. He rallied support of other community members to create an on-line petition and gathered nearly 1,500 signatures. The planning team also received an informal request for information from an individual community member who is passionate about Hawai'i's natural resources and WWII historic sites.



Cpl. Kyle Abreu-Buendia, a machine gunner with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, and Lance Cpl. Tony Whatley, a rifleman with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, shoots rounds down range during Combat Pistol Program qualification training and firing at the PRTF, April 30, 2013.

The public voiced concerns on a broad range of topics that included the robustness of MCBH's public involvement strategy, the thoroughness of the shoreline erosion studies, the timing of the sheet pile construction, the types of engineering best practices considered, hazardous material concerns due to the accumulation of spent lead throughout the ranges, and the comprehensiveness of the alternative's analysis, marine resource surveys, cultural impacts, cumulative impacts, and the impacts to the coastal features in front of PRTF due to the wave action and the longshore currents.



2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai‘i



Despite receiving formal and informal inquiries outside of the public comment period, most of which were received post FONSI determination, the planning team acknowledged and responded, recognizing that the public can make important contributions by providing information, perspective and, in some cases, unique expertise to assist making decisions affecting the environment. Taking this into account the planning team spent hundreds of hours responding to public, Congressional, and media inquiries. They were committed to clearing up misunderstandings and misconceptions by providing additional information about the PRTF Shoreline Stabilization EA project in an effort to maintain transparency.

Summary of Accomplishments
Final Environmental Assessment

November 2019

Based on the information gathered and the analysis conducted during the preparation of the EA, the USMC concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action would not significantly impact the quality of the human or natural environment. A FONSI was issued for the preferred alternative based on the following criteria: 1) No cultural resources would be impacted (per consultation with the State Historic Preservation Division); 2) the action was unlikely to cause adverse effects to natural resources such as Hawaiian Monk Seal, Green Sea Turtle, or Essential Fish Habitats (per consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration); 3) there are no foreseeable effects to Hawai‘i’s Coastal Zone (per consultation with Coastal Zone Management Office); and 4) no public comments were presented during the public comment period. Best Management Practices will be implemented to further minimize both short-term construction and long-term effects on the environment. Consequently, an EIS is not required.



View along PRTF shoreline from the west end of PRTF



2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



Inquiry Response Strategy

The greatest challenge posed by this planning project was addressing the public comments provided outside of the comment period. The planning team responded to formal Congressional inquiries from State House Representative Bob McDermott (Jan 2020), U.S. Senator Brian Schatz (Dec 2019), and U.S. House Representative Ed Case (Dec 2019). The Surfrider Foundation sent a letter on June 14, 2020 to the Secretary of the Navy also requesting an EIS be conducted. The planning team provided a response to the Surfrider Foundation in August 2020, with a courtesy copy to U.S Senator Brian Schatz, U.S Senator Mazie Hirono, U.S. House Representative Ed Case, Administrators of Hawai'i's DLNR, the CZMA Program, and the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency. The planning team also participated in a teleconference with staffers from Senator Brian Schatz's office in February 2020 and provided a STAFFDEL tour of the PRTF to seven staffers representing the offices of Senator Brian Schatz, Senator Mazie Hirono, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, and Congressman Ed Case. They also responded to a community member inquiring about a potential historic building in the project area.



Congressional staffers stop to ask questions during a tour of Pu'uloa Range, Jan. 24, 2020. Marine Corps Base Hawaii (MCBH) LtCol Timothy Pochop, Director Environmental Compliance and Protection Division at MCBH hosted Tim Nelson, staff for Representative Ed Case, (D-HI), Jacqueline Conant, staff for Representative Ed Case, (D-HI); Carlos Santana, staff for Senator Mazie Hirono, (D-HI); Dale Hahn, staff for Senator Brian Schatz, (D-HI); Kainoa Penaroza, staff for Representative Tulsi Gabbard, (D-HI), Derrick Clark, staff for Representative Tulsi Gabbard, (D-HI), Brandon Garay, staff for Representative Tulsi Gabbard, (D-HI) at Pu'uloa Range to discuss the PRTF Shoreline Stabilization EA. MCBH range personnel explained the importance of Pu'uloa range on Marine Corps training, including the long distance capabilities of the range and the support the ranges gives to other military and non-military training.

In addition to the formal Congressional responses, the planning team participated in and responded to informal inquiries. LtCol Pochop provided a presentation on the EA and the NEPA process to the community of Ewa Beach at a Neighborhood Board meeting on November 14, 2019. The planning team responded to media questions from over six different local news affiliates, who ran print and TV stories about the PRTF Shoreline Stabilization EA. MCBH regularly sent a representative from the planning team to the Ewa Beach Neighborhood Board meetings to provide updates and engage with the community members.

Adjusted Planning Strategy

Based on the public concerns received, the planning team revised the implementation strategy of the Preferred Alternative. The Preferred Alternative will now be implemented in phases. In the



2021 SecNav Environmental Awards
Environmental Planning, Team
Marine Corps Base Hawai'i



first phase, dependent upon available funding, MCBH will implement projects to revegetate available fast land areas fronting all ranges, while continuing to monitor shoreline erosion. In the second phase, MCBH will move the short-distance ranges back from the shoreline including installation of backstop berms, structures, and utilities as necessary. MCBH is not programming or budgeting for the most contentious aspect, the third phase sheet pile structures at this time. They will continue to monitor erosion following implementation of the first two phases. MCBH will continue to monitor the conditions throughout implementation in the event there are substantial new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that bear on the proposed action or its impacts.

Conclusion

MCBH shares the public's goal of long-term sustainability of our coastal and marine resources. MCBH also recognizes that protecting natural and cultural resources is an important part of our responsibilities while simultaneously ensuring mission readiness by enabling Marines and other servicemen and women to conduct realistic training now and into the future. There is no other range on Oahu that provides this training capability. The training conducted at the PRTF is vitally important to Marine Corps' readiness and enhances our ability to respond to any crisis or contingency in the Pacific. MCBH's relationship with community members is also vitally important. Therefore, the planning team worked tirelessly to provide substantive responses to the inquiries and requests for information, post public comment period and post FONSI, in an effort to address the public's concerns. The planning team also modified the implementation strategy of Preferred Alternative based on public concerns. The team's work showed adaptability and commitment to support the completeness of the planning effort and NEPA process while respecting and appropriately addressing local community concerns.

The Marine Corps Base Hawai'i Environmental Compliance & Protection Division is dedicated to meeting and exceeding expectations of our community; *Continual Improvement in Pursuit of Excellence is Our Goal*. We appreciate the opportunity to share our team's accomplishments with you. Mahalo.



Environmental Planning Team (left to right): Daniel Geltmacher, Range and Training Area Manager (RTAM) and Installation Range Control Officer for MCBH; Jacquelyn Bomar, NEPA Program Manager for MCBH; Lance Bookless, Senior Natural Resources Manager for MCBH; LtCol Timothy Pochop, Director Environmental Compliance and Protection Division at MCBH; Meagan Ostrem Community Plans Liaison Officer for MCBH; John Bigay, Environmental Planner for NAVFAC Pacific (not pictured).